

For the Teacher

LEARNING THE PIECES

1. By *Imitation*. A pupil comes to his first piano lesson eager to learn to play a piece. He must not be disappointed. But, since he cannot read notes, it is necessary to teach the early pieces by imitation. Because of his inability to use his fingers easily, he is likely at first to watch his hands rather than the notes. After he has learned the piece he may be asked to play it while looking at the notes, thus introducing an important factor in *music reading*, that of keeping the eyes on the notes instead of the hands. This is the first step in *eye training*.

2. By *reading the notes*. As the pupil gains in physical ease, and comes gradually to know the names of the notes and their keyboard locations, the teacher will encourage him to learn the pieces by reading instead of depending wholly on imitation.

MUSIC READING (See also "Learning the Pieces")

From the beginning this book makes music reading an essential part of learning the pieces. The pupil learns the names of the notes as they occur in the pieces, and the teacher should use every opportunity to help the pupil impress these notes and their keyboard locations on his mind. But this is only a part of the process of learning to read music. An equally important activity is training the eyes to observe the direction in which the notes progress (up or down) and whether they repeat or move by steps or skips. A third and no less important factor is the ability to make instant and correct rhythmic response to the note values and rhythmic figures. Clapping the note values while watching the notes as the teacher plays and counts is a valuable activity in this regard. (See "Counting time.")

PLAYING FROM MEMORY

Suggestions for memorizing are given at some length in the Teacher's Text on page 10.

PLAYING FOR THE PUPIL

In the earlier years of study it is most important for the pupil to hear in advance the piece he is about to study. He should have a good idea of the melody, rhythm and mood which he is to express, thereby enabling him to direct his practice along well understood and constructive lines.

COUNTING TIME

Brief explanatory statements are made in the pupil's text about meter, and the names and values of notes and rests are given as they occur in the pieces. Clapping the note values while the teacher plays and counts is an excellent way to get the correct rhythm of a piece. This activity introduces the idea of counting and paves the way for later counting by the pupil himself. Counting while playing is not advisable for some time, as it preoccupies the pupil to such an extent that his playing is apt to become tense and unmusical. Seldom should this activity be started until toward the close of the first year of study.

TECHNIQUE

1. *Avoid strain and tension*. Care has been taken to avoid strain and tension by keeping the technical problems well within the physical limitations of the pupil. The first pieces are simple melodies divided between the hands and played with a *legato* touch. These are followed by pieces consisting of two melodies, one for each hand, with contrasting note values. Each hand should be learned separately before playing hands together. (See Teacher's Text, page 6.)

2. *Types of Accompaniment*. Three types of left hand accompaniment to a right hand melody are given: a. broken chord accompaniment, b. waltz type of accompaniment, c. repeated chord accompaniment. To these may be added also the "short slur" (See p. 39.) These accompaniments should be played lightly without unnecessary motions of the hand or arm, while the melody should be played with a clear, singing tone. Such contrasting touches are not too difficult if sufficient practice is given to each hand separately.

3. *Other problems*. Other technical problems, such as Fingering, Hand Crossing, Finger Substitution, etc., are treated as needed in the pupil's text.

4. *Daily Dozen*. These exercises for the development of control need not delay going on to the next material, but when once started may be continued as daily drills as long as the teacher feels they are needed. Difficult spots in any piece may be made into a "Daily Dozen." Exercises correlated with pieces are especially effective because the pupil can see an

immediate reason for them. Pupils will cooperate in the matter of drills if they seem to have meaning and provided they do not become mere drudgery.

5. *Chords*. Two-Tone Chords are presented first as being easier for the inexperienced and not-too-strong hand of the pupil. Later, Three-Tone Chords are given in "broken" and "blocked" forms. The progression starting from the root position of the Tonic Chord is used because of the ease with which it can be played.

KEYBOARD CHARTS

Whenever new hand positions are introduced, there is a Keyboard Chart, marked with finger numbers, by which the pupil finds the hand position. The notes corresponding to the keys to be used are shown on the staff. The pupil should be taught from the start to use these guides, as they give the immediate help needed and form a background for reading music.

THE PUPIL'S TEXT

On each page a text for the pupil gives information and makes explanations helpful in learning the piece. The teacher will, of course, amplify this text according to the particular need of the class or individual pupil, and will refer again and again to any information or ideas which should become a part of the pupil's equipment. By these means the pupil will gradually come to understand the meanings of the symbols and materials he is using. The teacher should study the text with the pupil. Other devices, such as the "Warning Signals," etc., will attract and interest the pupil helpfully.

THE MAJOR SCALE

This subject is introduced and treated in detail on page 20, and thereafter suggested in a number of different keys. The scale is at once related to pieces in order that the pupil may think of it as a melody and not merely a mechanical exercise. The pupil should be taught to play the scale with a singing tone and good hand-position. These are matters for gradual development rather than incessant drill.

TRANSPOSITION

Transposition is introduced on page 21, after the pupil has been shown how to build major scales. Thereafter the teacher should be on the alert for further opportunities for transposition. It is advisable, however, to transpose only those pieces which lend themselves very readily to a change of key.

PLAYING MUSICALLY

Children should not be expected to play with an emotional feeling beyond their years, but they can play musically even from the beginning. They should be taught to play with good tone and with such expression as they are capable of feeling themselves. Thumping and racing through the pieces ought definitely to be discouraged. A pupil should be encouraged to listen critically to his own playing. The teacher may develop taste by illustrating the difference between musical and unmusical playing.

THE QUESTION BOX

Several "Question Box" pages are designed to summarize and fix topics learned on preceding pages. This is done by means of questions, writing lessons, and reading tests. The comments and rating by the teacher (found at the bottom of the page) will enlist the interest of both the pupil and his parents. Pupils of this age are very fair minded, they value just criticism and have little respect for undeserved praise. But the greatest care should be taken to encourage rather than discourage their efforts.

RECITAL PIECES

This caption naturally gives the pieces so indicated a special dignity, but it is not intended to convey the impression that other pieces in the book are less worthy of public performance. Many of the other pieces are also good recital material and the teacher should have no difficulty in giving them the dignity they deserve. The "Recital Pieces" have been spaced throughout the book somewhat in the nature of summary material and partly also as something toward which to work. Most of them include some more advanced problems which must be taught by imitation and which are designed to provide background experience that later becomes the subject for specific instruction. A limited amount of such forward-looking material is stimulating and encouraging to the pupil.